

Reading: Assess Systems Impacts

Culture and Values

An organization's systems reflect its culture and values. These values are embedded in:

- What is taught, rewarded, and promoted;
- What is considered "successful";
- The procedures that get designed and policies that get defined; and in the accepted and expected way people work with each other.

(Source: Mohrman et al., *Designing Team-Based Organizations: New Forms for Knowledge Work.*)

Systems must work to reinforce and support the values and behaviors desired in the organization, particularly when values or behaviors are new. If the organization's systems work at cross-purposes, the organization is less successful.

A Systems Impact Example

When an organization is introducing an on-line communication network, where users will share a new common language and be electronically connected, these are some of the possible systems impacts:

- **Human Resources** —recruitment/hiring or retraining of existing staff to assure skill to manage network is available in-house; development of workshops and/or job aids to train staff in use of network; development of policy on telework.
- **Information Technology**— development of criteria for levels of access and connectivity; programming of network and installation of hardware/software; development of policy on privacy and network security.
- **Facilities** — redesign of facilities to house new servers and IT staff; modification of workstations if warranted; reevaluate space needs depending upon outcome of telework enabled by new network.
- **Budget** — build in cost of new equipment/software and installation in initial year; project usage and maintenance costs and add to budget in out-years.

Federal systems are often inter-connected, long-standing, and difficult to change quickly or simultaneously. Because of this challenge, it is vitally important for those designing and implementing change to assess and address systems impacts. The teams and task forces formed to implement change should have the specific functional or technical expertise to gauge the true impacts and develop workable alignment strategies.

The PIPE Model

Assessment of systems impacts generates an itemized list of areas that need solutions. The PIPE model provides a reminder to study what is needed in four major areas:

- **Policies and Procedures** – Policies and procedures that need to be established or modified to support the change. Examples are delegations of authority, standard operating procedures or work processes.

- Information and Communication – Methods for providing employees with the information they'll need to do their new work and perform their new roles, and systems for communicating with employees about the change. This area includes the need to access broader and deeper levels of information to accommodate new responsibilities, access to databases, information technology, electronic messaging, decision support systems, or systems that support collaboration.
- People – Systems that affect the human resource management aspects of the change. This area includes staffing, job design, performance management, compensation, reward and recognition, training, and career opportunities.
- Equipment and Facilities – Changes in equipment and facilities needed to support the change. Equipment issues include access to computer hardware and software, updated telephone systems, and photocopying and production equipment. Facilities issues include the physical configuration of work space, new space, or the need for common areas.